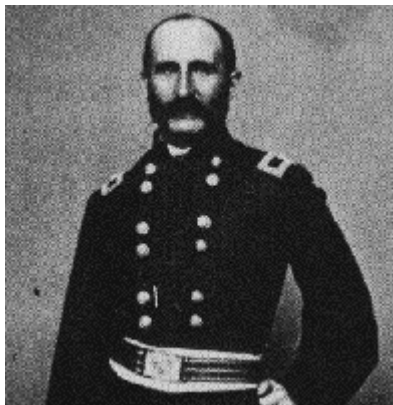


Fort Sumter / Overview Slide Show

Narration

It is March of 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation has freed people enslaved in the states in rebellion and offered them work in the Union army. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton sits in his office, bewildered at the fact that the recruitment of blacks into the Union Army in the area of Charleston, South Carolina is so poor. "I don't understand it," he exclaims in dismay to Brigadier General Rufus Saxton. "If I were consigned to a life of bondage, working in the hot sun picking cotton, enduring whippings, and I heard that President Lincoln had freed me, I'd have swum down the Ashley River with the dogs and gators snapping at my heels to get away from those plantations! It's them this war is all about, isn't it? Why, there are more Negroes than white folks in Charleston County! If they'd only rise up, they could even take the city for the Union!"



Brig. General Rufus Saxton

www.multied.com/Bio/UGENS/USASaxton.html

General Saxton rubbed his sideboard whiskers. "I wonder," he said, "do you think they would rise up? Are there other ways that they could resist, hurting the Confederates and thereby helping us? Maybe, Mr. Secretary, it might benefit the cause to send some of our colored spies to the area to gather some information, see what they're thinking, how things are for the colored down there. Maybe with that sort of information, you and the President can decide whether resistance to slavery by the colored folks in Charleston could be part of our strategy."

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Narration (cont'd)

"Yes, yes, all right. Assemble the best of them. Twenty-five or thirty maybe. Get them papers, slave hire tags. Let them nose around, see what those Negroes are doing, why some are coming along and others aren't. Report back in a week."

General Saxton stood and bowed his head. "I'll get started right away, Mr. Secretary." He turned and left the room.